

# Montana WIC Program

## Retailer Newsletter

SPRING 2012

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2

MT WIC Facts

Redeeming Fruit &  
Vegetable Benefits

Farmers' Market  
Nutrition Program

3

Retail Authorization

4

Store Specials

Program Booklets

Please share this  
information with your  
staff.



## WIC Infant Formula Approved Purchase Sites

Federal policies require State WIC agencies to publish a List of Formula Wholesalers, Distributors, Retailers, and Manufacturers from which retailers must purchase their infant formula. This is to ensure that the formula has not been compromised. The 2012 list is posted on the Retailer page of the Montana WIC's website [www.wic.mt.gov](http://www.wic.mt.gov) and included with this newsletter.

## Participant Incentives

Authorized WIC Retailers may not offer incentive items solely to WIC participants. Such practices include, but are not limited to providing food, merchandise or services to WIC participants which are not provided to other store customers. It is acceptable to offer/provide an item or service to all store customers, but WIC participants may not be singled out.

Such practices may result in a conflict of interest and effective June 1, 2012, will be a violation of the Montana WIC Retailer Memorandum of Understanding.

## Buffer Percentage

The State WIC Office will be lowering the buffer percentage amount for all WIC benefits. This buffer amount is added to the peer group average price to create the maximum prices allowed by Montana WIC. The impact of this change is expected to be minimal; however it is important to keep prices current to make sure that your WIC benefits don't reject for "Over Max Price".



## Montana WIC Facts March 2012

- ⇒ WIC participants served – 20,283
- ⇒ Authorized retailers - 199
- ⇒ Benefits (checks) paid - 51,393
- ⇒ Benefits (checks) rejected - 341
- ⇒ Top rejection reasons:
  - » Missing stamp - 190
  - » Illegible stamp - 26
  - » Over Max Price - 75
  - » Missing Signature - 17



## Redeeming WIC Fruit & Vegetable Benefits

### May not exceed the value printed on the benefit!

A large number of Fruit & Vegetable benefits are being rejected by the bank because the “Amount of Sale” filled in by the cashier exceeds the maximum dollar amount printed on the benefit. The FVB’s have a fixed maximum amount of \$6, \$10 or \$15. If the customer purchases more than the benefit is worth, they may not pay the overage and the cashier needs to work with the WIC customer to determine which items to remove from the transaction. Guidance may be found on the [Fruit & Vegetable Benefit Redemption Guide](#) page of the Retailer Booklet.

Bookkeepers can catch errors and avoid additional bank fees by reviewing these benefits and correcting errors prior to deposit. Please refer to [Benefit Processing – Accounting Office](#) page of the Retailer Booklet or page 21 of the Montana WIC Retail Reference Manual for instructions on how to correct WIC benefits. Redemption issues are easier to resolve before they are sent to the bank.

Please call Retail Services at 1-800-433-4298 option 2 or (406)444-4746 for guidance.

## Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program

Farmers’ Market season is upon us and many WIC participants receive FMNP benefits in addition to their regular WIC benefits.

**Remember:** \$6 Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program benefits can only be accepted by farmers. If a WIC shopper tries to spend one in your grocery store, do not accept it and refer them to the WIC clinic. A FMNP benefit is pictured so you know what to watch for.

Do not redeem in-store!



# Retailer Authorization

## Getting Geared up for Vendor Contract Renewal

2012 is underway and Montana WIC is working collaboratively with authorized retailers to continue providing women, infants and children with the supplemental nutrition they need to ensure proper growth and development.

As authorized retailers' contracts expire, new contracts are issued, and Montana WIC would like to provide a brief outline of steps that retailers can take to make the contract renewal process is as easy and simple as possible.

The items required for submission to the State WIC Office prior to new contract issuance are:

- An updated application packet – to ensure current contact information, demographics and SNAP authorization
- A copy of your current State of Montana business license
- A copy of your current proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance
- A copy of your current proof of general liability insurance

Compiling a WIC file now will make renewal later in the summer easier and faster. Often, incorrect items are submitted to the State, causing delays or in some cases, contract expiration, which can be frustrating for retailers and participants, as benefits cannot be redeemed at retailers without a current contract. To prevent this disruption, the following outlines a few of the important details regarding renewal.

**State of Montana business license** is required for WIC authorization. City or county licenses are NOT. For a copy of your State of Montana business license, or to request an update to your store name, address, owner, please contact the Secretary of State's Office and request the Business Services Division at 406-444-3665.

In order to show **proof of insurance**, both general liability and workers' compensation, a policy summary page or policy description page works best. Both include the store name, amount of coverage, description of coverage and policy effective dates. If you don't currently have a form with these four items, or your coverage will not extend into the renewal period, please contact your insurance carrier and request a document that will meet the requirements.

As of October 1, 2011, all authorized WIC retailers must also be **SNAP authorized**. Please be sure to notify the State Office if your SNAP authorization status changes.

For all other questions or concerns, please call the State WIC office at 1-800-433-4298.



# Store Sales, Specials, BOGO & Coupons

It is the policy of the Montana WIC Program that WIC participants be able to take advantage of store sales, special promotions (such as store “club cards”) and coupons when using their WIC benefits. This also includes, but is not limited to “Buy One, Get One Free”, “Buy One, Get One”, “ounces free”, points for use of a store card, or similar promotions.

The “free” item, ounce, etc., does not count against the quantity or items listed on the benefit, but are given to the participant in addition to the items listed on the WIC benefit as long as the item can be found in the approved food list.

The cashier will ensure the prices charged include any store sale or other promotion, or the value of the coupon is deducted from the transaction total.

## Retailer & Participant Booklets

No changes have been made to the Montana WIC approved food list since the “effective 2010” booklet, which is currently in use. This booklet will not receive an update until EBT is implemented in late 2013.

If you need additional copies, please contact the State WIC Office.



Department of Public Health & Human Services  
**Montana WIC Program**

1400 Broadway, Cogswell Bldg. C305  
PO Box 202951  
Helena MT 59620-2951

Phone: (406)444-5533  
1-800-433-4298 Option 2  
Fax: (406)444-0239

<http://wic.mt.gov>

225 copies of MONTANA WIC RETAILER NEWSLETTER were published at an estimated cost of \$0.122 per copy, for a total cost of \$27.45 for printing and \$99.00 for distribution.

### Who do you call?

Retailers should contact their Local WIC Agency for concerns regarding complaints and general program questions.

Contact the State WIC office if your store will be changing ownership or you have questions about your contract.

Contact Carrie Reynolds (406-444-4746) at the State WIC office when issues arise with WIC benefits or prices change for WIC approved foods.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotapes, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (Voice and TDD.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (Voice and TDD.) USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.